III: Vampire

See No Evil

The Masquerade

PARKING GARAGE
DOWNTOWN LOS ANGELES
DOWNTOWN LOS ANGELES
NOW.
KA-BOOOOM!
NOW.
WHUD!
YSH... SONUVABITCH.

BDAM! BDAM!
ARE YOU ALRIGHT?!
GOT HURLED A HUNDRED FEET, SURE, I'M GODDAMN **PEACHY.**
WELL THEN TAKE COVER BEHIND SOMETHING, FOR CHRIST'S SAKE!
DON'T GET BOSSY.
SPAK!
SPPAK!
SPPAKK!
...THANKS, BY THE WAY.
DON'T MENTION IT, IT'S WHAT FORTITUDE'S FOR. WE SHOULD GET OUT OF HERE BEFORE THE REST OF THEM SHOW UP TOO.
REST? YOU THINK THERE'S **MORE**... ?!
WHAT, YOU DON'T?
SEE? THIS IS EXACTLY THE KIND OF PROBLEMS I'VE NEVER HAD TO DEAL WITH BEFORE I MET **YOU** PEOPLE! **ARGH**!!
AT LEAST NOW YOUR LIFE'S INTERESTING.
BOREDOM IS UNDERRATED. HOW DID WE EVEN GET **INTO** THIS ONE?
TWO NIGHTS AGO...

09:53 PM, SKYELINE APARTMENT BUILDING

09:53 PM, SKYELINE APARTMENT BUILDING
APARTMENT 4

NYYAAAAHHH!!
JESUS CHRIST... WHAT IS IT?
THEY...THEY KNOW. THEY'RE COMING.
WH... SLOW DOWN. WHAT DID YOU SEE?

WITH HEXENHAMMER AND FLAME, THEY COME...
WAIT, I DON'T... WHO'S "THEY"?
CHILDREN OF TORQUEMADA.
WH... YOU MEAN THE...? OH. ...OH.
DAMN. THEM AGAIN?
YEAH.
YOU'RE SURE?
YEAH.
...DAMN!
...YEAH.
WELL, THAT'S SIMPLY MARVELOUS. "THE WICKED, NO REST FOR", HM? EH, FINE. COME. MILES TO GO.
AH, OFF ON THE YELLOW BRICK ROAD TO.. ERR, WHERE EXACTLY?
LET'S RUIN SOMEONE ELSE'S NIGHT.

ELSEWHERE, LATER.
TEEP!
TEEP!
TEEP!
CLICK!
"BAUM & TRUST" OFFICES, HOW CAN I HELP YOU?
...I'M AFRAID HE'S NOT AVAILABLE AT THE MOMENT, WOULD YOU LIKE TO LEAVE A MESSAGE WITH...? OH... I SEE... OF COURSE.
...YES, LET ME SEE IF I CAN REACH HIM, PLEASE HOLD.
...BOSS? IT'S FOR YOU, LINE TWO.
I'M A LITTLE BUSY, HEATHER, HAVENT WE ESTABLISHED...?
...YES, SORRY, SIR, BUT IT'S "FAMILY".
MHM. CLOSE OR DISTANT?
BEEP!
CLOSE, SIR.
VERY WELL THEN... YES, I'M LISTENING.
IT'S ME. WE NEED TO TALK.

...WELL, THAT SOUNDED A BIT OMINOUS. AND A "GOOD EVENING" TO YOU AS WELL. NOT A SOCIAL CALL, I TAKE?

NOT SO MUCH, NO. TELL ME, HOW MUCH DO YOU KNOW ABOUT HUNTERS CURRENTLY ACTIVE IN L.A.?

NOTHING, I'D SAY, SEEING AS THERE AREN'T ANY.

YEAH, WELL, **THAT'S** ABOUT TO CHANGE.

OH? HOW DO YOU KNOW?

I... KNOW.

RIGHT, I SEE. AND WHEN WILL THIS...?

SOON. AND YES, I KNOW THAT'S VAGUE. BUT IT'S NOT AN EXACT SCIENCE WE'RE WORKING WITH

STUPID... PONYTAIL... STAY... UP THERE...

NO NO, I REALIZE THAT. SO, ARE WE TALKING ABOUT THE REAL INQUISITION HERE OR JUST ANOTHER WITCH HUNT? WE HAVE **HAD** HUNTERS IN THE CITY BEFORE - AND THEY ARE USUALLY TROUBLING IN THEIR FANATICISM, YES, BUT EASY TO MISLEAD.

ACTUALLY, FROM WHAT I UNDERSTAND, IT SEEMS THAT THEIR... WAIT, YOU'LL GET A TANGLE THAT WAY

EXCUSE ME?

OH! WASN'T TALKING TO YOU, SORRY. ANYWAY, IT SEEMS THEIR PARANOIA ACTUALLY LED THEM ONTO SOMETHING THIS TIME, SO YES, UNLESS IT'S NIPPED IN THE BUD, WE MIGHT [redacted] LOOKING AT AN ACTUAL ALL-OUT INQUISITION SCENARIO.

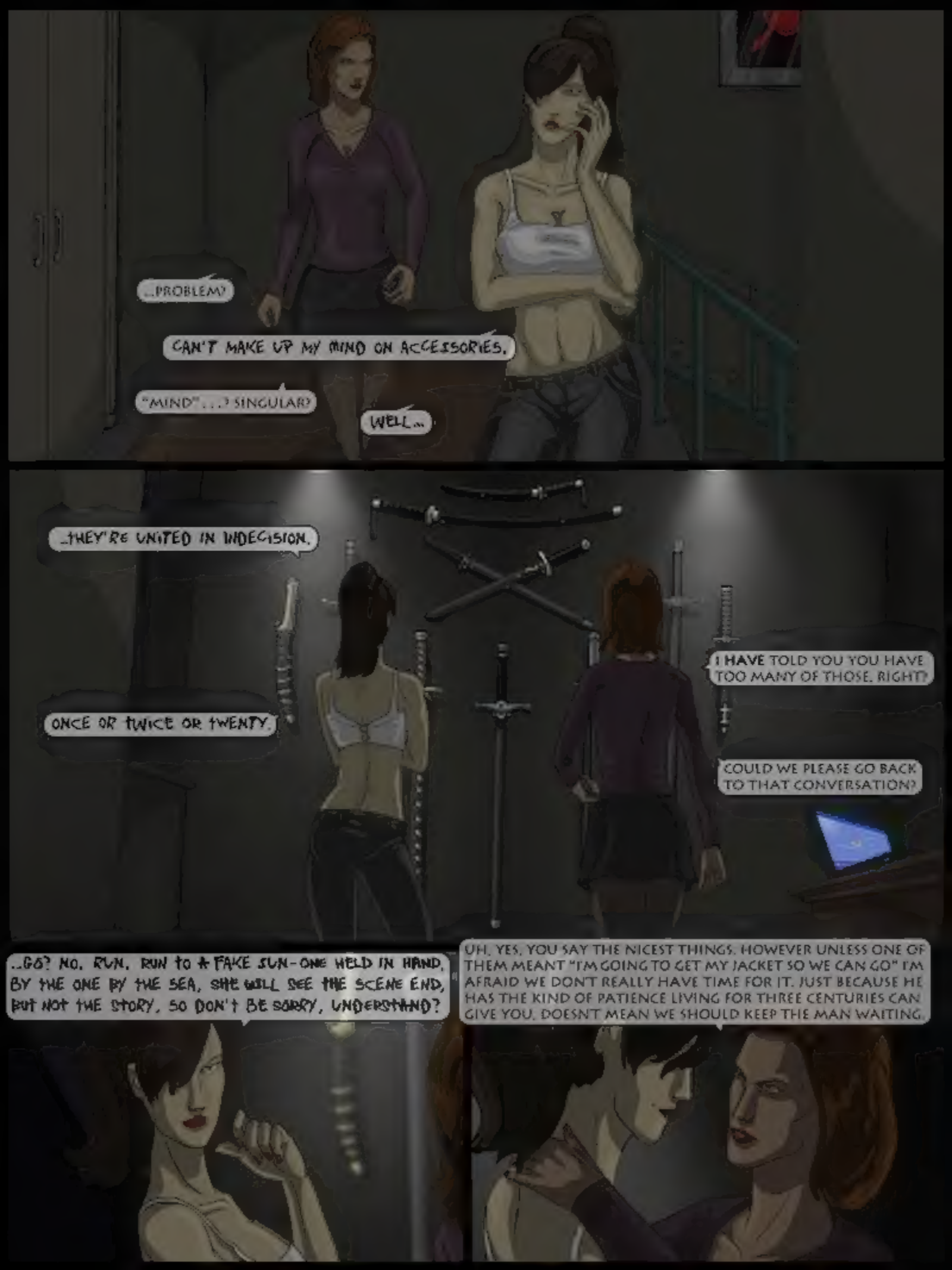
YES, THAT DOES SOUND SERIOUS. I'VE SEEN THE FIRST ONE, CAN'T SAY I CHERRISH THE THOUGHT OF LIVING THROUGH ANOTHER ONE. BUT - DOESN'T THIS FALL UNDER THE RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE CITY'S PRIMOGEN, OR PRINCE, ACTUALLY, TO TAKE CARE OF?

I'M SORRY, THERE MUST BE STATIC ON THE LINE - OR DID YOU REALLY SUGGEST WE SHOULD ALL ENTRUST OUR WELL BEING... TO **THE PRINCE?**

HA! TOUCHE. ALRIGHT, I'LL START LOOKING INTO IT. HOW SOON CAN YOU MEET ME AT THE OFFICE?

WITHIN AN HOUR, -ISH.

GOOD. I'LL SEE YOU THEN. CLICK!


...PROBLEM?
CAN'T MAKE UP MY MIND ON ACCESSORIES.
"MIND"...? SINGULAR?
WELL...
...THEY'RE UNITED IN INDECISION.
ONCE OR TWICE OR TWENTY.
I HAVE TOLD YOU YOU HAVE TOO MANY OF THOSE, RIGHT?
COULD WE PLEASE GO BACK TO THAT CONVERSATION?
...GO? NO. RUN. RUN TO A FAKE SUN-ONE HELD IN HAND, BY THE ONE BY THE SEA, SHE WILL SEE THE SCENE END, BUT NOT THE STORY, SO DON'T BE SORRY, UNDERSTAND?
UH, YES, YOU SAY THE NICEST THINGS. HOWEVER UNLESS ONE OF THEM MEANT "I'M GOING TO GET MY JACKET SO WE CAN GO" I'M AFRAID WE DON'T REALLY HAVE TIME FOR IT. JUST BECAUSE HE HAS THE KIND OF PATIENCE LIVING FOR THREE CENTURIES CAN GIVE YOU, DOESN'T MEAN WE SHOULD KEEP THE MAN WAITING.

HEATHER. WHAT DID ALL THE KINE MEDIA DUB THAT SUPPOSED SERIAL KILLER IN SANTA MONICA EARLIER THIS YEAR? SOMETHING ASININE...
THE "SOUTHLAND SLASHER"?
...YES, HIM. STILL AT LARGE, ISN'T HE? BRING UP ALL THE FILES AVAILABLE ON THIS.
RIGHT AWAY. UM, BOSS... THE "INQUISITION"?
VAMPIRE HUNTERS.
OH. SO PEOPLE LIKE... GABRIEL VANHELSING OR SOMETHING ACTUALLY EXIST IN REAL LIFE?
IT WAS "ABRAHAM", ACTUALLY, AND NO - HE'S PURELY FICTIONAL. THE REAL HUNTER MOVEMENT MADE A NUISANCE OF THEMSELVES IN THE SIXTEENTH CENTURY AND WAS ORIGINALLY A BRANCH OF THE INQUISITION, HENCE THE NAME. TROUBLESOME INDIVIDUALS, BUT - ULTIMATELY - THEIR OWN SECRECY IS THEIR WORST ENEMY.
AND THEY'RE COMING TO L.A.?
POSSIBLY.
SO, HOW SERIOUS IS IT? I MEAN, THEY'RE STILL JUST GUYS WITH GUNS, RIGHT...?
FOR THE MOST PART? YES. THEY DO HAVE THE NUMBERS AND THE FUNDING TO BE A THORN IN OUR COLLECTIVE SIDE FROM TIME TO TIME, HOWEVER. PLUS, MOST OF THEM ARE QUITE FANATICALLY DEVOTED TO HUNTING US... YOU'VE MET SOME OF MY ASSOCIATES - CLEARLY, WE SPEND OUR NIGHTS RAPING, PILLAGING AND SETTING CHURCHES ON FIRE. DEMONS, ALL OF US.
THEY'VE BEEN HUNTING VA-... KINDRED EVER SINCE THE... SIXTEENTH CENTURY?
A TESTIMONY TO THEIR EFFICIENCY, I SUPPOSE - NOT THAT THE SABBAT COULDN'T USE A MEASURED DOSE OF ANNIHILATION. BUT SADLY, THEY DON'T SEE A DIFFERENCE BETWEEN US AND THEM. THIS IS WHY THERE'S A MASQUERADE IN PLACE. AFFORDING BOTH US AND THOSE PARANOID HUNTERS SOME PEACE. THAT IS. UNTIL SOMEONE BREAKS IT, OF COURSE.
YOU THINK THAT'S WHAT HAPPENED?
SOMETHING HAS, OR VERY SOON WILL, LED THEM HERE. SO YES, IT'S NOT UNLIKELY THAT SOMEONE'S BEEN DRAWING TOO MUCH ATTENTION TO THEMSELVES. AND - THAT - IS WHY I'D LIKE YOU TO BRING UP THE FILES ON THE SO CALLED "SLASHER" AS I'VE ASKED YOU A FEW MINUTES AGO.
OH! OH. RIGHT, SORRY, BOSS! I'M ON IT. DO YOU WANT ME TO GET AHOLD OF...?
NO, THAT'S ALRIGHT. FIND THE INFORMATION. I'LL CALL THEM MYSELF.

VRRRRROOOOOOMMMM

Bum & TRUST

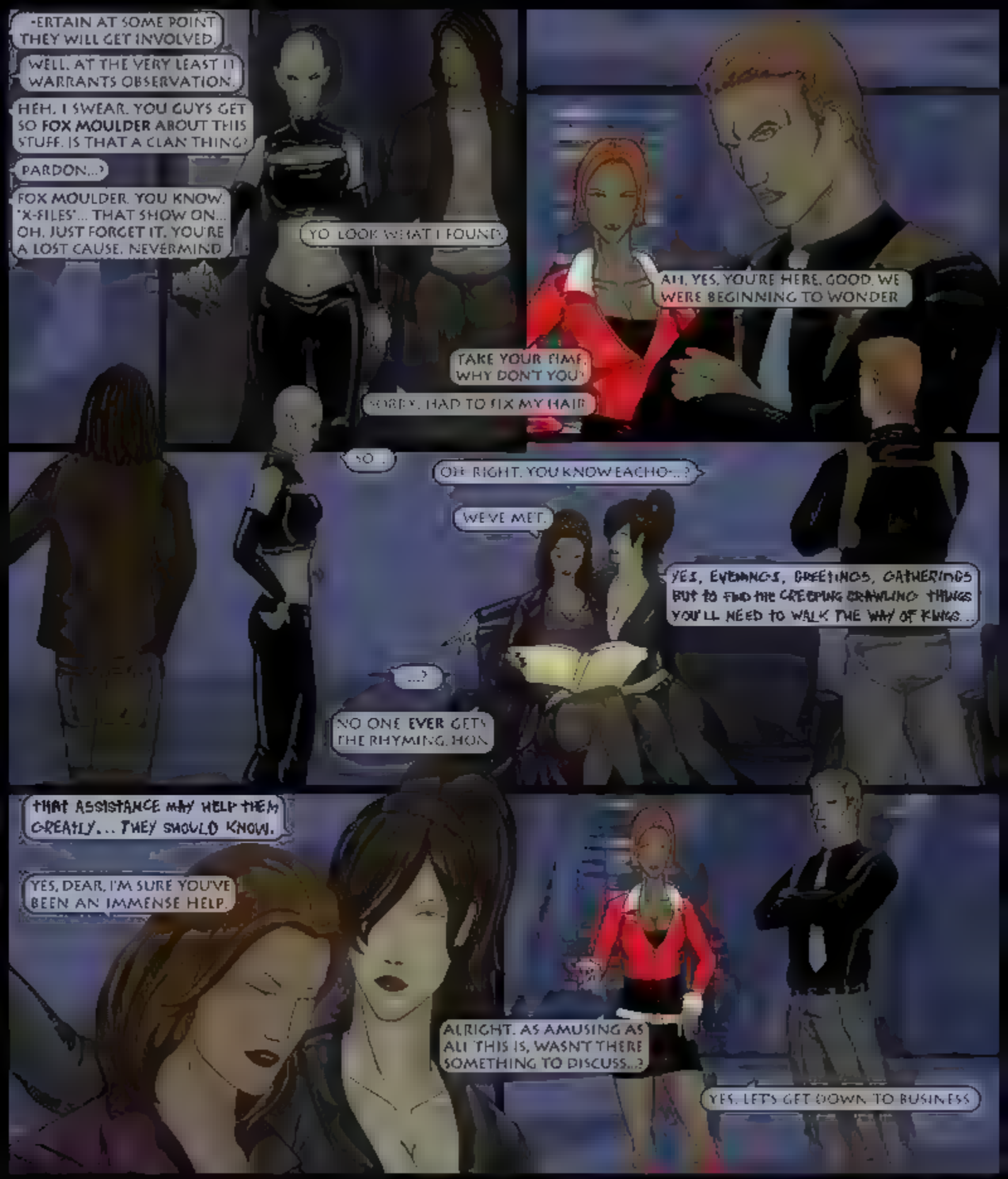
LATER...

SCREEECH!

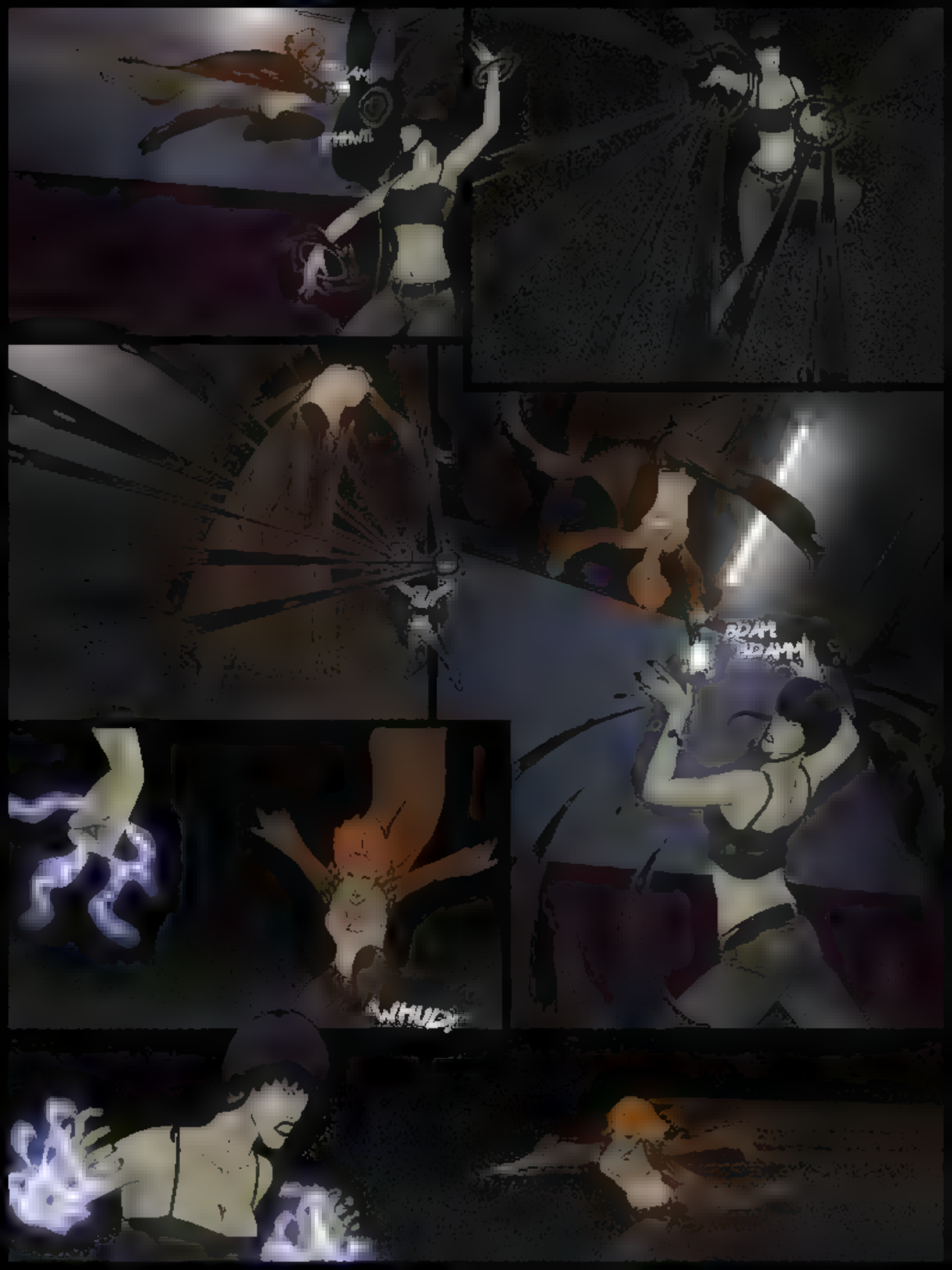
VRRRRRRRRRRR-KLAK!

THUP!

REAL INCONSPICUOUS
IF YOU'RE DONE POSING, LET'S GO.
EVERYONE'S HERE?
YEP. WE WERE JUST WAITING FOR YOU TO SHOW YOUR PRETTY FACE. FEEL FREE TO KEEP THE HELMET ON, BY THE WAY
CAN'T. I'LL NEED IT TO KNOCK THAT DOG OFF OF YOUR HEAD
WHAT'S UP WITH WHAT?
YOU. WE'VE BEEN TRYING TO GET AHOLD OF YOU FOR A WEEK - DIDN'T KNOW IF YOU'D SHOW UP TONIGHT EITHER. SO, UNLESS IT'S A NOSFERATU HOLIDAY, SOMETHING'S UP WITH YOUR PEOPLE
FORTITUDE. I'M NOT SCARED
POTENCE. YOU SHOULD BE
HEH. HEH. SO, WHAT'S UP ANYWAY?
IF IT'S NONE OF MY GODDAMNED BUSINESS, TELL ME TO FUCK OFF. BUT DON'T GIVE ME "THERE'S A THING."
YEAH. THERE'S A... THING
A THING?
YEAH. A THING.
SOMETHING'S WRONG IN OUR OWN DAMNED BACKYARD, AND WE, WE, DON'T KNOW WHAT. SO IT'S STRUCK A NERVE. ALRIGHT?
LOOK. IF I KNEW WHAT WAS GOING ON... THE CLAN'S LOOKING INTO IT - SOMETHING'S... GOING ON BENEATH THE CITY, IS ALL
YOU GONNA LEAVE THE LOOK-AT-ME-I'M-A-VAMPIRE MOBILE JUST STANDING AROUND THERE LIKE THAT?
YEAH, AS IF THINGS WOULD GET STOLEN IN FRONT OF HIS BUILDING. COME ON
ALRIGHT. FINE. HAVE YOUR SECRETS
BLACK
GOD. WHAT DID I JUST SAY? WE DON'T KN... AH, FORGET IT
HEH. POINT.


-ERTAIN AT SOME POINT THEY WILL GET INVOLVED.
WELL, AT THE VERY LEAST IT WARRANTS OBSERVATION.
HEH. I SWEAR. YOU GUYS GET SO FOX MOULDER ABOUT THIS STUFF. IS THAT A CLAN THING?
PARDON...?
FOX MOULDER. YOU KNOW. 'X-FILES'... THAT SHOW ON... OH, JUST FORGET IT. YOU'RE A LOST CAUSE. NEVERMIND
YO LOOK WHAT I FOUND
AH, YES, YOU'RE HERE. GOOD. WE WERE BEGINNING TO WONDER
TAKE YOUR TIME, WHY DON'T YOU?
SORRY. HAD TO FIX MY HAIR
SO...
OH RIGHT. YOU KNOW EACHO-...?
WE'VE MET.
YES, EVENINGS, GREETINGS, GATHERINGS BUT TO FIND THE CREEPING CRAWLING THINGS YOU'LL NEED TO WALK THE WAY OF KINGS...
...?
NO ONE EVER GETS THE RHYMING, HON.
THAT ASSISTANCE MAY HELP THEM GREATLY... THEY SHOULD KNOW.
YES, DEAR, I'M SURE YOU'VE BEEN AN IMMENSE HELP.
ALRIGHT. AS AMUSING AS ALL THIS IS, WASN'T THERE SOMETHING TO DISCUSS...?
YES. LET'S GET DOWN TO BUSINESS

BRRAHH! NOBODY MESSES WITH THE SABBAT AND LIV-
-WHUFF!
BLOODSUCKED CRETIN
BRAAK
TAKE THAT! LA SOMBRA WITCH DOWN!
I'VE GOT THIS! FORGET THEM!
SLISSSH!
BEFORE SHE STOPS PLAYING AROUND AND SIMPLY DROWNS US IN SHADOW
SHE CAN DO THAT?
DUNNO. SOME CAN. UNLESS YOU FEEL LIKE FINDING OUT. TAKE HER THE HELL DOWN!
VAMOS CHICA!
WOOOSHH!
POINT.


BDAM
BDAMM
WHUD

KEEP DODGING. ONE SLIP, BITCH. ONE. S'ALL I NEED TO RIP YOUR...
SORRY. DID YOU NEED TO HEAR THE REST OF THAT?
NO, I'M GOOD. I BELIEVE I GOT THE GIST OF IT: "KILL, MAIM, KILL", THAT GENERAL DIRECTION... **SO ANYWAY**, SINCE YOU'RE BACK, I ASSUME THAT YOU KNOW WHERE WE NEED TO GO?
THUD!
UGH...
NOWHERE. AS IT TURNS OUT, HIS PORCHE IS STILL PARKED HERE. WE'LL JUST WAIT NOW.
OK, WELL, ALRIGHT THEN. BY THE BY, SHOULD WE...?
NO, HE'S GOT IT UNDER CONTROL. WE'D JUST GET IN THE WAY - 'SIDES, IT LOOKS AS IF HE'S ABOUT TO WRAP IT UP.
WHAP!
SANTA MONICA
BROTHERS SALVAGE
THIS SEEMS TO BE THE PLACE.

SHOULDN'T WE PARK SOMEWHERE A LITTLE MORE HIDDEN AND A LITTLE LESS OBVIOUS?
NO NEED FOR STEALTH. WE DIDN'T COME HERE FOR A FIGHT, JUST CIVILIZED CONVERSATION.
YESSD. CIVILITY AND SERIAL KILLERS GO HAND IN HAND. I'M SURE IT'S HIS MIDDLE NAME: "SOUTHLAND, CIVILITY, SLASHER"
AS FAR AS HAVENS GO, THIS IS REALLY LOW STANDARD.
ACTUALLY, I'VE SEEN FAR WORSE.
WHICH DOESN'T MAKE THIS ANY LESS CRUDE.
AGAIN, FROM WHAT WE'VE GATHERED, THOSE MURDERS WERE JUSTIFIED. BARBARIC - YES - BUT NOT UNDESERVED.
SOUNDS LIKE INSTANT KARMIC JUSTICE. AND JUST WHAT EXACTLY IS "JUSTIFIED MURDER"?
THIS COUNTRY'S LEGAL SYSTEM PRACTICES IT. I'M SURE THERE'S A DEFINITION SOMEWEHERE.
YOU SOUND COLD LIKE THE BLACK WIDOW.
MY POINT IS THAT MORALITY IS, CONTRARY TO POPULAR BELIEF, COMPLETELY SUBJECTIVE.
THUS SPOKE ZARATHUSTRA.
NIETZSCHE, LOVE?
THE VOICES THOUGHT IT FITTING.
SO, DO WE KNOW IF HE STILL HAUNTS THIS CAR CEMETERY?
FOR CERTAIN? NO.
TEEP!
ONE WAY TO FIND OUT.
KLAK
KLAK!
KLAK

THE BUILDING UP FRONT...?

YES, AS GOOD A PLACE TO START LOOKING AS ANY.

IT'S OPEN?

I SUPPOSE THERE'S NO SENSE IN KEEPING ANYTHING ON A **JUNKYARD** LOCKED.

LET'S SEE IF...

CLICK!

AND THE PRIZE BEHIND DOOR NUMBER ONE IS... A DUSTY ROOM FILLED WITH LOTS AND LOTS OF BOXES, LADIES AND GENTLEMEN! WE REGRET TO INFORM YOU WE'VE RAN OUT OF SERIAL KILLERS.

WELL, IT DOES LOOK... UNINHABITED.

TRUE, IT DOES LOOK THAT WAY.

WHICH YOU DON'T BELIEVE, BECAUSE...?

THIS WOULD BE PRECISELY HOW I'D HAVE MY PLACE LOOK, WERE I TRYING TO KEEP A LOW PROFILE, IN A CITY FILLED WITH VAMPIRES I DON'T KNOW - NOR DO I CARE TO - WHO MAY, QUITE POSSIBLY, WISH TO HAVE ME ELIMINATED.

MHM, I GUESS, **DETECTIVE**.

JUST A THEORY.

FINE. ASSUMING WE FIND NOTHING THOUGH, DO WE THEN CONTI... HM?

WHAT IS IT?
VENI, VIDI, VOCO IN DUBIUM. LET'S DO SOMETHING ELSE.
UH, HON, REALLY NEITHER THE TIME NOR THE PLACE FOR THIS.
LADIES. FOCUS.
I KNOW, I KNOW, I JUST NEED A SECOND HERE. LOOK, WERE...
HUSH. TRUST ME, IT'LL BE FUN.
HON, SERIOUSLY.
SHHH. I HEAR A VOICE.
YOU ALWAYS DO.
NOT ONE OF MINE.
...THERE ARE MORE MINDS IN HERE THEN THERE ARE PEOPLE.
...OH.
YEP.
SOOOOOOO...
IF I WAS A NEW CREEPY VOICE, WHERE WOULD I BE...? WOULD I BE THERE, OR WOULD I BE...
...HERE? SEE, THIS WAS FUN. NOW YOU SEEK AND WE'LL HIDE.
...!
ARMOR PIERCING BULLETS, HIGHLY LETHAL EVEN TO KINDRED, SO THINK TWICE... NOW, I DO REALIZE THE SITUATION IS SOMEWHAT TENSE, BUT BEFORE YOU ATTEMPT ANYTHING RASH, PLEASE HEAR US OUT.